

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TUNIS 06516 221547Z

53

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 L-02

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NIC-01 /070 W

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R 221506Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7180

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 6516

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA OPENS ELECTION CAMPAIGN:  
PSD ANNOUNCES "PLATFORM"

1. SUMMARY: TUNISIA'S 1974 ELECTION CAMPAIGN BEGAN OCTOBER 20 WITH A SPEECH BY PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA IN MEDENINE AND PUBLICATION OF A MANIFESTO BY THE DESTOURIAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PSD). BOTH SPEECH AND MANIFESTO WERE BASED ON THEME OF NATIONAL UNITY WHICH HAS BEEN A CENTRAL POINT OF GOVERNMENT AND PARTY STATEMENTS OVER PAST MONTHS. BOURGUIBA'S SPEECH FOCUSED ESPECIALLY ON THE NEED FOR INDUSTRIAL PEACE, WHILE MANIFESTO OUTLINED AREAS OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE IN THE PSD'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. NEITHER DECLARATION CONTAINED ANY SURPRISES. HOWEVER CONTINUED OFFICIAL PREOCCUPATION WITH UNITY ISSUE, EVEN AFTER ALLEGED TRIUMPH OF NATIONAL UNITY AT SEPTEMBER PARTY CONGRESS IS WORTH NOTING. END SUMMARY.

2. ON OCTOBER 20, PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA KICKED OFF THE CAMPAIGN FOR NOVEMBER 3 NATIONAL ELECTIONS WITH A TOUR OF THE SOUTHERN REGION OF TUNISIA. HE DELIVERED A MAJOR SPEECH AT MEDENINE IN WHICH HE REMINISCED AT LENGTH ABOUT HIGH POINTS OF THE INDEPENDENT STRUGGLE THAT  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TUNIS 06516 221547Z

OCCURRED IN THE REGION. THE BODY OF HIS CAMPAIGN OPENER

DEATH WITH THE FOLLOWING ISSUES: 1) MAINTENANCE OF NATIONAL UNITY IN ORDER TO PROTECT AND EXTEND THE BENEFITS OF ECONOMIC EXPANSION AND TO CONQUER UNDERDEVELOPMENT 2) CONTROL OF POPULATION GROWTH TO PREVENT REGRESSION FROM ECONOMIC LEVEL ALREADY ATTAINED; AND 3) ENDING WILDCAT STRIKES AND STUDENT DISTURBANCES WHICH JEOPARDIZE NORMAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. BOURGUIBA REFERRED TO THE VARIOUS PROBLEMS WHICH CONFRONT TUNISIA, PARTICULARLY INFLATION, AND SAID THAT THE ONLY WAY TO PROTECT THE NATION WAS TO MAINTAIN NATIONAL UNITY AND CONTINUE TO WORK. THE WORKER IS PROTECTED BUT ALSO OBLIGATED, HE SAID, BY THE PRINCIPLE OF COOPERATION DEFINED IN FREELY ACCEPTED LABOR/MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS, AND ARBITRARY BREAKING OF AGREEMENTS ONLY DRIVES AWAY CAPITAL CAUSING UNEMPLOYMENT AND DROP IN PRODUCTION. WORKERS ENGAGING IN WILDCAT STRIKES OR STUDENTS IN AGITATION WOULD BE TRAITORS TO THE PARTY AND A TO SOCIETY. TUNISIAN UNITY, HE SAID IN CLOSING, MUST RESIST SUBVERSIVE INTRIGUES ORCHESTRATED FROM ABROAD AND THE MANEUVERS OF THOSE WHOSE ONLY END IS TO SEIZE POWER OR SERVE PERSONAL INTERESTS.

3. DESTOUIAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PSD) ALSO PUBLISHED LENGTHY MANIFESTO ON OCTOBER 20 WHICH AMOUNTED TO A PARTY PLATFORM FOR THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. IT CALLED TO MIND THE IDEAL OF NATIONAL UNITY WHICH, IT SAID, HAD PERMITTED PAST SUCCESSES AND PROTECTED PEOPLE FROM FEUDAL AND REACTIONARY INIQUITY AS WELL AS FROM EXTREMISM AND DEMAGOGY. THE PLATFORM ALSO REITERATED MAIN LINES OF PSD DEVELOPMENT POLICY AS DEFINED BY PARTY'S 9TH CONGRESS AND PROMISED CONTINUED GOVERNMENT ATTENTION TO SUCH FIELDS AS AGRICULTURAL MODERNIZATION, CONSOLIDATION AND EXTENSION OF INDUSTRIALIZATION, RATIONALIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES, IMPROVEMENT OF HEALTH CARE FACILITIES, CONSTRUCTION OF MORE HOUSING, AND INCREASE IN PURCHASING POWER THROUGH AN ADEQUATE INCOMES POLICY. MANIFESTO SOUGHT TO PORTRAY PSD AS MOST AUTHENTIC EXPRESSION OF POPULAR WILL AND ZEALOUS PROMOTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TUNIS 06516 221547Z

4. COMMENT: OPENING OF AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN WHICH ONLY CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE ARE PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND THE PSD'S LIST OF 112 DEPUTIES CANNOT HAVE EXCITED GREAT POPULAR INTEREST. CAMPAIGN, HOWEVER, GIVES PARTY AN OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM PUBLIC OF ITS PROGRAMS AND CONCERNS. PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH AND PSD MANIFESTO COVERED GROUND THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN THOROUGHLY PLOUGHED IN PREPARATION FOR THE 9TH PARTY CONGRESS IN SEPTEMBER.

IN ADDITION TO FOCUSING PUBLIC ATTENTION ON BROAD LINES OF PSD ECONOMIC POLICY, STATEMENTS REITERATED GOT'S PREOCCUPATION WITH NATIONAL UNITY, WITH ECONOMIC THREAT POSED BY WILDCAT STRIKES, AND WITH SECURITY THREAT POSED BY STUDENT DISTURBANCES.

5. GOT'S CONTINUAL REPETITION OF THEME OF UNITY AND CHALLENGES REPRESENTED BY EXTRA-LEGAL STRIKES AND STUDENT AGITATION WOULD SEEM INDICATE A DEEP PREOCCUPATION. ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN AFFORDS GOVERNMENT LEADERS AN EXTRA OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAL FOR SUPPORT FROM ENTIRE COUNTRY AND TO CLAIM THAT DISSIDENTS REPRESENT ONLY MINOR, INSIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS.

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PARTY LINE, ELECTION CANDIDATES, ELECTIONS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** shawdg  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
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**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** shawdg  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 26 AUG 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <26 AUG 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <06 MAR 2003 by shawdg>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA OPENS ELECTION CAMPAIGN: PSD ANNOUNCES "PLATFORM"  
**TAGS:** PINT, TS, (BOURGUIBA, HABIB)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005